

SECTION 2

SYSTEM BACKGROUND

2.1 Introduction

The goal of the A/P System is to provide natural resource managers and researchers with information and management support to directly aid in addressing the issues of the region. The objectives of the A/P Study data management program include:

- to catalog and assess the literature and data about the region;
- to establish institutional and electronic mechanisms for accessing, integrating, and analyzing pertinent automated data;
- to provide resources for automating data developed by the Study or required by the Study; and
- to develop data reporting and tracking systems that regularly summarize the conditions of the estuarine area.

2.2 User Groups

To help identify the data and software needed in the A/P System, a list of potential users was compiled prior to conducting a data needs assessment. Four primary user groups were identified: resource managers, the research community, local governments, and private citizens and organizations. Resource managers includes various state and federal government agencies with management responsibilities within the A/P Study area. The research community includes university and laboratory researchers with a research interest in A/P Study related issues. Local government users are those county, city, and town governing bodies that have management responsibilities to maintain a healthy environment for their citizens. Private citizens and organizations include the general public, environmental groups, and industry who could benefit from using the data contained in the A/P System upon its implementation. The following four sections discuss each of these user groups in more detail.

2.2.1 Resource Managers

Natural resource managers at the state and federal levels have the responsibility for protecting the natural resources of the State of North Carolina through effective